

CLAIMS

1. A method of scanning comprising the steps of:
5 providing a scanning system (10) having a sample holder (14,220,54) and a relatively movable scanning device (18);
performing a scan of at least a part of an object (22,250,52) located on the sample holder;
10 establishing orientation of a plane of the sample holder (14,220,54); and
interpreting data from the scan using the orientation of the sample holder characterised in that, the orientation is established using data from the scan
15 of the object.
2. A method according to claim 1 wherein, the orientation is established by defining a plane (56b) of the sample holder.
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3. A method according to claim 2 wherein, the plane in which orientation is established is limited by boundaries (76a,76b).
- 25 4. A method according to any preceding claim wherein, the orientation is established by extracting at least three measurements.
5. A method according to any of claims 1 to 3
30 wherein, the orientation is established by extracting data for at least 240° around the surface of the sample holder.
6. A method according to any preceding claim wherein,
35 the orientation is established by measuring during a

single process.

7. A method according to any of claims 1 to 5
5 wherein, the orientation is established by measuring
during more than one discrete processes.

8. A method according to any preceding claim wherein,
the orientation is established within a defined
10 vertical envelope with respect to the sample holder.

9. A method of scanning comprising the steps of:
providing a scanning system (10) having a sample
holder (14,220,54) and a relatively movable scanning
15 device (18);

scanning a datum;
scanning a sample; and
interpreting data from the sample scan using data
from the datum scan;
20 characterised in that the scanning system
automatically carries out the datum and sample scans.

10. A method of scanning comprising the steps of:
providing a scanning system (10) having a sample
25 holder (14,220,54) and a relatively movable scanning
device (18);

scanning a datum;
scanning a sample; and
interpreting data from the sample scan using data
30 from the datum scan;
characterised in that both the datum and sample
scans are carried out effectively as one scan.